

#### 4VAC15-240-91

#### Game: Turkey: Checking turkey by persons exempt from license requirement or holding a license authorization number

##### Summary:

This proposal is to remove all references to checking, check stations, and check cards to reflect the requirement for all big game harvests to be reported electronically using either the telephone, internet, or GoOutdoors Virginia mobile harvest reporting application beginning in the 2021-22 hunting season.

##### Proposed language of amendment:

#### **4VAC15-240-91. Checking Reporting turkey by persons exempt from license requirement or holding a license authorization number.**

A. Upon killing a turkey, any person exempt from the license requirement as described in § [29.1-301](#) of the Code of Virginia, or issued a complimentary license as prescribed in § [29.1-339](#), or the holder of a permanent license issued pursuant to § [29.1-301](#) E, or the holder of a Virginia license authorization number issued by a telephone or electronic media agent pursuant to § [29.1-327](#) B shall, upon vehicle transport of the carcass or at the conclusion of legal hunting hours, whichever comes first, and without unnecessary delay, ~~present the carcass to an authorized checking station or to an appropriate representative of the department in the county or adjoining county in which the turkey was killed or~~ report his kill through the department's automated harvest reporting system. ~~Turkeys killed during the January season (as prescribed in 4VAC15-240-10) and the spring turkey seasons (as prescribed in 4VAC15-240-40 and 4VAC15-240-60) must be reported through the department's automated harvest reporting system.~~ The person reporting the carcass shall be given a ~~game check card furnished by the department or a~~ confirmation number from the automated harvest reporting system. ~~If checked at a big game check station, the game check card must be kept in possession with the carcass until the carcass is processed. If the carcass is left unattended, the game check card must be securely attached to the carcass. If reported using the automated harvest reporting system,~~ No check card is required as long as the hunter who killed the turkey is in possession of the carcass. If the automated harvest reported carcass is left unattended or transferred to the possession of another individual, written documentation including the successful hunter's full name, the date the turkey was killed, and the confirmation number must be created and kept in possession with the carcass until the carcass is processed. If the automated harvest reported carcass is transferred to the possession of another individual, the written documentation must be transferred with the carcass to the individual and kept in possession with the carcass until the carcass is processed. If the carcass is left unattended, this written documentation must be securely attached to the carcass.

B. It shall be unlawful for any person to destroy the identity of the sex of any turkey killed until the turkey is reported ~~to an authorized checking station or to an appropriate representative of the department in the county or adjoining county in which the turkey was killed or~~ by using the automated harvest reporting system as required by this section. Any turkey that has not been reported ~~to an authorized checking station or to an appropriate representative of the department in the county or adjoining county or counties in which the turkey was killed or~~ by using the automated harvest reporting system as required by this section found in the possession of any person exempt from license requirements or holding a license authorization number shall be forfeited to the Commonwealth to be disposed of as provided by law.

**Rationale:**

Beginning in the fall of 2021 all harvest reporting will occur electronically through either the telephone, internet, or GoOutdoors mobile application. Mandatory game checking, a cornerstone of DWR's game management program for more than 70 years, will remain vital for game management in Virginia for many years to come. Thus, it is critical that every hunter report their harvest using one of the electronic reporting systems. Since 2004, DWR has offered some form of electronic reporting, and beginning in 2019, electronic reporting options were available for all species for which reporting is required. In fall 2019, 86% of all deer, 93% of fall turkeys, 100% of spring turkeys, 100% of bobcats, and 58% of all bears were reported through an electronic reporting system.

The proposed amendments remove all references to physical check stations and check cards for license exempt hunters.